

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
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September 2, 1977

TO: Directors of Personnel

FROM: Raymond Jacobson
Executive Director *Jim*

SUBJECT: Granting Time Off for Religious Observances *for*

We are in receipt of inquiries concerning established Government policies and regulations on granting time off for religious observances. Because of the approaching Jewish High Holy Days, we request expeditious transmission of the following message to your activities:

"Bulletin No. 630-30, Granting Time Off for Religious Observances, has just been issued to remind agencies of established Government policies and regulations regarding this subject. Agencies are encouraged to approve requests for annual leave or leave without pay or to make other reasonable accommodations to the religious needs of employees to the extent that such accommodations do not cause undue hardship on the business of the agency. 'Reasonable accommodations' may include such arrangements as changing a tour of duty, substituting another qualified employee, or granting compensatory time off, when appropriate. Excused absence (administrative leave) is not appropriate for this purpose.

"While the approval of requests for annual leave and leave without pay and the determination of what constitutes a 'reasonable accommodation' are at the administrative discretion of the agencies, your attention is directed to section 713.204(g) of the Commission's regulations which requires that if an agency cannot accommodate to an employee's religious needs, the agency has a duty in a complaint arising under the provisions of the Equal Opportunity regulations to demonstrate its inability to do so."